

## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA FOODSCRAPS PROGRAM GUIDE

About 25,000 tons of foodscraps are put into our local landfill every year! Burying trash in landfills is expensive and space is limited, with costs increasing each year as a result. Composting foodscraps is less expensive than landfilling, and businesses pay less for this service than trash. Foodscrap collection is easy to implement in a clean and effective manner with little to no increase in staff time. All businesses that produce large quantities of foodscraps will see a reduction in their trash bill when they implement foodscraps collection.



In order to help you implement a successful Foodscraps Program at your business, we have compiled this *Foodscraps Program Guide* to inform you of the best practices and regulations for the program. The contents include:

- [Foodscraps Program Best Practices](#)
- [How to Avoid Foodscraps Contamination](#)
- [Contamination Procedure and Consequences](#)
- [Buying Compostable Tableware and Bags \(Approved Vendor List\)](#)
- [Non-Compostable Packaging Alternatives](#)

As always, we are ready to help you be successful and save money with the Foodscraps Program. Please call a Commercial Composting Specialist at 564-5631 with any questions.

## FOODSCRAPS PROGRAM BEST PRACTICES

### Introduce the Program to your Staff:

- Place yellow collection bins in strategic locations indoors.
- Apply foodscraps labels to the yellow collection bins.
- Generate enthusiasm for the program.

### Foodscraps Education and Training:

- Schedule your free Foodscraps training(s) with Environmental Services (564-5631) as soon as your yellow bins are in place.
- Attend these staff training meetings with management to demonstrate support and show that the program is important.
- Schedule a separate meeting with your management staff and Environmental Services in order to communicate all aspects of the foodscraps collection process and to ensure that your management has the ability to answer questions and troubleshoot with your staff.
- The City Commercial Composting Specialists have many resources available to help staff understand the differences between foodscraps, recycling, greenwaste, and trash. They will conduct onsite trainings as well as provide Foodscraps Composting Brochures, posters, and stickers for the bins.



### Best Practices Kitchen Tips:

- Be attentive to what you throw into "organics only" receptacles. If you are uncertain, it is best to throw something into the regular garbage can instead of contaminating the foodscraps bin.
- Post the Environmental Services contact number (564-5631) and instruct management and staff to call if they need help discerning if something is contamination or not.
- Place yellow foodscraps bins in all strategic areas:
  - Kitchen (food prep area and dish clearing areas): Make it easy for the chefs/cooks to toss only foodscraps or organic materials into the containers. Place yellow containers near the sink/dishwashing station so plates can be scraped into it and then washed. The containers inside the restaurant should be labeled for Foodscraps only, since contamination from non-organic materials can ruin the composting process. Your waste hauler and the Commercial Composting Specialists will provide stickers and yellow indoor containers to help identify foodscraps collection points.
  - Place yellow bins in the restaurant and kitchen bus stations for initial plate clearing by bus staff
  - Use compostable bags only: Only bags that are certified ASTM or BPI are acceptable. Be aware of vendors that say their bags comply. If they are not ASTM or BPI certified, they will be considered contamination, and result in

contamination charge and warning per protocol! Regular plastic bags are not allowed in the program.

- Train Kitchen / Bus staff / Waiters in foodscraps sorting. All foodscraps and leftovers should be collected in the yellow foodscraps receptacles.
- Pre-consumer foodscraps (any food the kitchen prepares but does not serve) that passes health/safety standards could be donated to local homeless shelters, or, if compostable, added to a yellow foodscraps bin kept at this preparation area.

### Yellow Bins for Customer Use

It turns out that customers mistakenly contaminate the food scrap bin, so leave it to your properly trained kitchen and bus staff to separate the foodscraps, recyclables, and trash. Set up your drop off area so that customers can simply leave their trays at the dish room for in-house separation.

### Contamination Protocol:

- Meet with management to discuss the contamination protocol, notification of contamination go to procedures, and disqualification from the program if contamination is not resolved (e.g. disqualification from program upon third notice of contamination). Please see [Contamination Procedure and Consequences](#) for a more detailed description of this process. Make it known that it is critical that developing the right habits are instilled in the beginning of the program.
- Post list of compostable and non-compostable materials for staff. Environmental Services provides printed copies of a poster or [foodscraps brochure](#). A sign posted on the wall above the containers is always helpful. Here is an example. Personalize it for the products found at your business.

Composting Guidelines	
Do Compost	Do NOT Compost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fruit &amp; Vegetable Peels</li><li>• Any Food Leftovers</li><li>• Coffee Grinds/Tea Bags</li><li>• Meat Scraps &amp; Bones</li><li>• Dairy &amp; Cheese Products</li><li>• Noodles &amp; Pasta</li><li>• Paper napkins</li><li>• Paper Products (without plastic coating)</li><li>• Small amounts of cardboard</li><li>• Pizza boxes, Chinese-style take-out boxes (no metal handle)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dishes or Silverware</li><li>• Coffee Creamers or Stirrers</li><li>• Styrofoam Cups</li><li>• Plastic Bags, Films, or Wrap</li><li>• Food Wrappers or Paper</li><li>• Aluminum or tin cans</li><li>• Glass of any kind</li><li>• Tin foil wrappers</li><li>• Any plastic</li></ul>

- Review and understand the [Foodscrap Packaging Alternatives](#). Often, if an item is not compostable (e.g. plastic straws), a new item can be substituted from the [Approved Vendor List](#) in this guide (e.g. paper straws).
  - Many vendors currently stock a wide range of “compostable” serviceware including plates, to-go containers, napkins, and cutlery. There are also several good manufacturers of biodegradable plastic bags. See the [Approved Vendor List](#) for sources.

#### **Pick-Up Day:**

- Designate a dependable staff member as the one responsible (and a second in case of that person’s absence) for rolling out the yellow bins on the appointed collection days. Appointing a particular person ensures that it doesn’t stay unattended!
- Foodscrap dumpsters should be located in the trash enclosure. If there are space constraints, contact Environmental Services at 564-5631 to work out a solution. Foodscrap containers may not be placed in public parking lots.
  - Bin sharing: If you do not have space for additional containers, share existing ones with a neighbor. If two businesses each have room for only one trash dumpster, they can share one of the trash dumpsters, replace the other with a foodscrap dumpster, and share that one too. Each business will be billed directly only for their share of each of the containers.

#### **Cleaning the Yellow Foodscrap Container**

- You can call your hauler to have your cart or dumpster cleaned twice per year at no charge, pay for extra cleanings, or you can clean it yourself. Here are some ideas for keeping your cart cleaner, longer:
  - Avoid dumping liquids into foodscrap collection cart
  - Use ONLY compostable bags to line collection containers (certified ASTM or BPI only)
  - Empty the bags from indoor containers into the dumpster when they are 40%-70% full. This will prevent the bag from breaking and leaking.
  - Line the inside of the cart with a sturdy ordinary plastic trash bag that can be used multiple times. Place the compostable bag inside the plastic bag and then dump only the compostable bag.
  - Staff may wish to wipe out carts after daily use to remove remaining residues

#### **Contact Numbers**

Allied Waste/BFI	965-5248
MarBorg	963-1852
Commercial Composting Specialist	564-5631

## HOW TO AVOID FOODSCRAPS CONTAMINATION

The City of Santa Barbara Environmental Services both thanks and congratulates you for participating in one of the country's most innovative Foodscrap Programs.

**What is Contamination?** When foodscrap containers are picked up by Allied Waste/BFI or Marborg, they must contain 100% compostable material only (stuff that will rot). Plastic, glass, metal, or other non-organic items will jeopardize the composting program. Please refer to the Environmental Services brochure, [Getting Started: Foodscrap Composting in 5 Easy Steps](#) for a list of what goes in and what stays out of the foodscrap bins. Please see [Foodscrap Packaging Alternatives](#) to help you reduce small contaminants in your foodscrap bins.



**Training for Success:** Composting is an easy, low-tech way to turn foodscrap into 'reusable gold' and reduce the amount of waste landfill. In order for the composting process to work properly, the yellow compost bin must be kept free from material which contaminates the non-organic (foodscrap) materials. When composting programs fail, it is often because trash is mixed with compostable materials. This can be easily avoided by taking advantage of our free staff training. Environmental Services provides bilingual training for every member of your staff responsible for properly screening "what-is-and-isn't" appropriate for the yellow foodscrap bin. Ensuring that your staff are trained is the most effective way to make certain your business continues to benefit from the savings achieved in the Foodscrap Program.

**Thinking Outside the Box:** For most participants in the Foodscrap Program, contamination can be prevented with good training and initial management oversight. However, some businesses may require some creative thinking and the implementation of new processes. For example, for a cafeteria-style business that utilizes reusable tableware and the food trays that are shuttled on a conveyor belt back into the dish room, it may be simpler and more efficient to train a few kitchen staff members in foodscrap sorting rather than relying on the customers or students to do so. For more tips and ideas, don't hesitate to call the Environmental Services Staff.

Our staff at Environmental Services is always available to meet with you and create a Best Practices Plan (see [Foodscrap Program Best Practices](#)) to prevent foodscrap contamination and trouble-shoot any unique issues you may encounter with your business. Please call us at 564-5631.

## FOODSCRAPS PROGRAM: CONTAMINATION PROCEDURE AND CONSEQUENCES

The Foodscrap Program benefits your business with significant savings and benefits our environment by reducing landfilled waste. In order to participate however, the foodscrap bins must be free of non-foodscrap contaminants. The presence of any contaminants prevents the material from being composted! See [Getting Started: Foodscrap Composting in 5 Easy Steps](#) for a list of contaminants.

**Continued Participation in the Foodscrap Program:** Unfortunately, due to the sensitivity of the composting procedure and process to contaminants, if the foodscrap bins are found to be contaminated on more than two occasions, participation in the Foodscrap Program will be discontinued, resulting in a return to regular trash service and rates.

**Summary of Contamination Procedure and Notification:** If foodscrap bins are contaminated with trash material, a garbage truck will be automatically scheduled to service them. Customers will be assessed a special on-call pickup charge for contaminated containers that cannot be collected by the compost truck. A Commercial Composting Specialist will contact customers with repeatedly contaminated containers to provide additional staff trainings and resources to ensure that only foodscrap are placed in the yellow bins.

**Level 1 (First Notice):** An email will be sent to the Foodscrap Participant about the contamination and with a request for correction. Please contact City Environmental Services at 564-5631 for troubleshooting and/or extra training to help solve the problem.

**Level 2 (Second Notice):** The contaminated bin is photographed and the business is contacted by the City. The foodscrap container will be picked up and charged as trash. The business will be informed that a **third notice will result in disqualification** from the Foodscrap Program. Please contact City Environmental Services at 564-5631 for troubleshooting and/or extra training to help solve the problem.

**Level 3 (Third Notice/Disqualification):** The business will receive a notice of disqualification from the City, and the Foodscrap bins will be picked up and charged as trash unless/until the business re-applies for the Foodscrap Program.

**Re-Application to the Foodscrap Program:** In the unfortunate event that a business becomes disqualified from the Foodscrap Program, they may re-apply for participation. A previously disqualified business must wait until other businesses wanting to start foodscrap have been launched before they may re-apply. The City Environmental Services will work with you to help resolve earlier problems and make your foodscrap effort a success. Your success is our success! Please contact Environmental Services at 564-5631 to begin the re-application process.



## BUYING COMPOSTABLE TABLEWARE AND BAGS

### Products That Can be Used in the City Composting Program

Download the [Approved Vendor List](#) for sources of compostable bags and tableware that are compatible with the City of Santa Barbara's Composting Program.



Compostable Tableware

### PLA Compostable Plastics

Polylactic acid or polylactide (PLA) is made from corn oil, looks just like plastic, and is technically compostable, **Please do not use it unless it has an identifying green stripe.** When handed to your customers, they think the containers are plastic since they look and feel virtually the same, and they will mistakenly toss them into a blue recycling container. This contaminates the plastics and can ruin an entire batch of recycled plastic. Even if the material is not put into the recycling bin, without the green stripe, the waste hauler or composter thinks it is contamination and might reject the load. If you do not want to use green strip PLA, please use ordinary plastic products instead and put them in the recycling bin.

## NON-COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING ALTERNATIVES

- Most of the items left on the table after a meal are compostable. This includes food as well as napkins, wrapping paper, and paper tray liners. There are just a few things such as plastic creamer cups, plastic coffee stirrers, or wrap that prevent the entire load from being swept into the composting bin. If you can replace those few items with compostable alternatives, bussing the table will be much easier and contamination won't be a problem. Please see the [Foodscraps Packaging Alternatives](#) document which provides a list of alternative compostable materials that may be used to further your program, such as replacing plastic straws with paper straws, etc.